

that extended only over a few months, and then when pressing duties of an entirely different character must have engaged their attention largely; and surely they would not assume that they are in the position of an official of the Department, as to their capacity of judging the condition of the Indian population. I have already shown that, as far at least as the Indian supplies are concerned, we have furnished the Indians with a lavish hand. I believe, also, that if a proper supervision had been exercised over the distribution of supplies to the Indians, if the Indian agent had exercised over them that control which would have made them feel their responsibility to the House and to the country, much more would have been got out of that \$500,000 a year, which this House generously appropriated towards furnishing the Indians with food. In 1831, I find among other things, on looking through the reports for a number of years past, that the first direct instance of frauds in the supplies furnished for distribution to the Indians occurred in 1831, and in that year, among other frauds that are reported by Indian inspectors was one in the supply of tobacco. It was reported as being in almost every case bad, and one agent reports that his supply was largely composed of pulverised coal, brick-dust, and refuse. In fact, it appears, from his expressive language, doubtful whether it was the tobacco or the coal-dust that was adulterated. All the reports of one or two subsequent years abound in complaints of this kind, but it seems a peculiar circumstance that the reports of the later years do not furnish as much evidence on the surface of the discontent indicated by statements such as that which I have just read. Whether it is that the Indian inspectors became more convinced, as the years rolled on, of the desires of those who were in authority over them, either at Regina or elsewhere, and knew it was more satisfactory that everything should be reported correct, whether so or not, I am not prepared to say. There is very little reference in the departmental reports of that year, to the supply of flour, which was, by the medical gentleman to whom the question was referred, reported in 1833, as being productive of disease and death among the Indians to whom it was issued. It is not necessary, however, to confine ourselves to the records of the Department of Indian Affairs, during those years. I find that, in the earlier years, the reports of the North-West Mounted Police also furnished evidence that the Indians were suffering and starving, as a result of the policy of the Department. In the year 1830, Commissioner Irvine reports that since the disappearance of the buffalo the Indian situation had assumed a different aspect:

"As long as buffalo lasted the Indian was self-supporting, independent and contented. Now, however, he is in a very different position; his only means of support is virtually gone, and he has to depend on the Government for assistance, but forced in so doing to remain about the police posts. This population will, irrespective of the aid received from Government, be a starving one."

Then, again, Superintendent Walsh reports in the same year that:

"The horses that died from scurvy and carcasses of horses that died during the autumn and early winter were gathered up and eaten."

I ask the attention of the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien), whose statements, confined to his own observation, I would not for a moment attempt to dispute, to a statement such as this, showing clearly that the officials have reported that much more serious destitution existed than was indicated by merely a few old weather-beaten men and women gathering around the camp when he was on active service in the North-West. I am perfectly satisfied that he has stated the case honestly, as far as his observation has gone, but it will be apparent to the House that his opportunities must have been limited, and, extending over only a few months, his visit must have very little influence in the direction of contradicting the very positive statements made by Superintendent Walsh. Mr. Walsh proceeds to say:

"The conduct of these starving and destitute people, their patient endurance, their sympathy and the extent to which they assisted each other, their strict observance of law and order, would reflect credit on the most civilised community."

And the report continues that the utmost consideration was shown by the Mounted Police at that time, even to dividing their rations with the Indians. In the Report of the Mounted Police for 1831, there is also evidence of a similar kind. The Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police that year expressed his apprehension of disturbance and his fear of starvation existing among the Indians by reason of the change in their condition. The Commissioner also reports:

"I foresaw that, if no aid was accorded them, they would starve and in a starving condition might have attempted to commit depredations."

And further:

"I would call your attention to the fact that, in a letter of the 20th of May last, I impressed on the Government the necessity of the Indians being well received in the north, also the fulfilment of all treaty obligations. * * The treatment the Indians receive particularly on arrival should be kind."

And, as if giving a warning of what would follow a contrary course of conduct towards the Indians, he says:

"They are quiet and law-abiding as a whole, and no fear need be apprehended at their hands so long as the Government continues to act justly towards them."

Mr. Simpson, who is on the Indian survey party, states in the year 1834 that he found Chief Alexis' camp, and he and his Indians were in a very destitute condition and almost naked. Besides this, there are a number of reports from Inspector McRae from the Battleford agency with which I will not trouble the House, but which bear out the contention of the hon. member for West Huron, and I think that has been amply proved. It has not been disproved, at all events, that the Indians have been in a starving condition, and therefore the charge made by the mover of this resolution is in every respect borne out. Seeing that these statements have not been controverted, I will refrain from using much of the evidence which it was my intention to submit in support of this proposition. But I will ask the attention of the House to the fact that, while much doubt has been attempted to be thrown on the statement of the Rev. Mr. Robertson, the superintendent of Presbyterian Missions in the North-West, and while the statement of the Rev. Mr. McDougall has been questioned, and while the Department has stated to us to-night, by the mouth of the leader of the House, that they examined into the charges which he made in reference to the conduct of the white settlers in the neighborhood of the reserves, there has been no answer whatever to the very grave charges that were made by Mr. Jackson in his place as a member of the North-West Council, and subsequently at a meeting in his honor held at Qu'Appelle. I think the charges there made are of the gravest kind, and until they are more successfully controverted than by any statement which has been made to-night, they justify the language of the resolution moved by the hon. member for West Huron. But I find that even the *Mail* furnishes reasonably strong evidence that the destitution which has been referred to did exist. From a letter dated Hamilton, 13th January, and signed "Westerner," which appeared in the *Mail* of the succeeding day, I make this extract:

"The position of the Indians at present is, as you well said the other day, critical. * * * To say that these poor creatures have no grievances is absurd. But few who have not been among them realise the hardships they are forced to contend with. By way of illustration I may refer to an incident which occurred during my stay at Crowfoot, about sixty miles east of Calgary. It was after the trouble was pretty well settled, when an old Cree chief came into camp, bringing a sample of flour which he had received from the Indian agent. Pointing to a heap of ashes on the ground, and then to the flour in his hand, he gave me to understand that the flour resembled more the smouldering embers than that for which it was intended; and I could not but think that he was but little wrong in his judgment. At once it occurred to me that the so-called flour was nothing but the waste from a grist mill floor."

Such is the evidence furnished by that correspondence. The hon. gentleman may recollect that the very same paper stated that the Indians had suffered from destitution, and that some had even died of starvation. Now, Sir, it